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INTERAGENCY CO-OPERATION AND COMMUNICATION
BETWEEN POLICE AND PAROLE AGENCIES

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**Interagency Co-operation and Communication
Between Police and Parole Agencies ***

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INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

A perennial issue facing most public service organizations is that of maximizing coordination and cooperation among themselves in order to most effectively and efficiently deliver their services to the public. This is particularly true of the network of organizations collectively referred to as the criminal justice system. This network of organizations share the same clients and at some basic level share similar goals of somehow responding to crime in order to reduce its incidence or its negative impact upon society. Ideally one might expect the various components of the criminal justice system to work together in cooperative harmony with each other in order to most efficiently achieve those ends. This is of course not the case. In fact it seems at times that conflict and competition among criminal justice organizations is much more prevalent and characteristic of the system than cooperation and coordination.

Achieving cooperation or coordination between components of the system often requires considerable effort and the expenditure of resources in order to overcome what seems at times to be the "natural forces" that mitigate against it.

Interorganizational Relationships

The issue of coordination is addressed by Reid (1964) in a discussion of interactions among social welfare agencies. His ideas are equally relevant to the criminal justice system. Reid, along with others (Benson, (1975), Levine & White (1961)) characterizes interorganizational cooperative activity as an exchange of resources. He specifies some conditions under which it is more likely to take place, namely when agencies share some similar goals, when each

has resources needed by the other, and in some cases in response to a motivating "community crisis".

Police departments for example would normally work quite independently of the armed forces in North America. During a time of civil insurrection, however, or upon declaration of the war measures act in Canada, cooperative activity among these organizations may become quite extensive since common goals of peace, order and security are focused upon and each has resources such as skilled, disciplined manpower, and information regarding local conditions and problems needed by the other. Joint action committees, liaison roles, and other cooperative activities would be established.

This paper will discuss an example of a project which is believed to have had some success in improving coordination of activities between two criminal justice agencies.

Formal Versus Informal Communication Networks.

Another idea which is relevant to the theme of coordination among criminal justice agencies is the distinction between formal and informal structures and systems of communication. The existence in every large organization or group of related organizations of a "grapevine" and the ubiquitous presence of individuals possessing influence or "juice" out of proportion to their formally designated position within the organization is evidence that informal communications play a major role in organizational functioning. The operation of these informal communication networks also plays an important part in coordination activity between organizations.

Mechanisms For Facilitating Interorganizational Relations: Liaison Roles.

Various mechanisms are available to facilitate interorganizational coordination. Khandwalla (1977) lists several commonly used between sub-units within large organizations. O'leary and Newman (1970) list several

possibilities specifically in relation to conflict resolution between police departments and probation agencies. Both mention liaison roles as examples. Hackler (1975 and 1979) discusses the formation of liaison roles within the criminal justice system and hypothesizes that these roles may become very influential in organizational decision making. He uses as one example a youth official in Vienna who is situated in the court house and acts as the main conduit for information passing between the fifteen judges and the numerous other youth officials situated in the district offices throughout Vienna.

In this paper I will attempt to place the particular liaison project which is the subject of the paper within the context of these three main themes, in the hope that the project, embedded and placed within a broader theoretical structure will be useful in understanding its operation and the operation of other cooperative efforts between agencies.

THE SETTING

It may be useful to first describe briefly the setting of the project and the state of interagency activity prior to the series of events which led up to the initiation of the joint project between the Edmonton Police Department and Parole Office.

The Edmonton District Parole Office is staffed by fifteen parole officers, three section supervisors, a district director and appropriate support staff. It supervises approximately three hundred and fifty to four hundred parole and mandatory supervision cases, and some day parole cases in community based facilities. In addition the office prepares and presents cases to the parole board from a nearby maximum security penitentiary and a provincial gaol. It also does initial classification and selection for penitentiary placement for newly sentenced federal prisoners in the Edmonton area.

The Edmonton Police Department is a fairly large metropolitan police force with approximately a thousand police personnel and appropriate support personnel.

Prior to the initiation of the liaison project communication between the two agencies took four basic forms.

First when a case is being prepared for presentation to the parole board and when a newly sentenced inmate is being evaluated for penitentiary placement, a standard form letter is routinely sent to the police department from the parole office, requesting a report from the police on the circumstances of the offence and the background of the offender and when possible a comment regarding his/her suitability for future release. These reports form part of the inmate's/parolee's official file. They are normally written by the police officer who investigated the offence(s) and are referred to by the police department as "automatic parole reports".

The second form of communication is of the informal case by case type where a parole officer or police officer would call the appropriate officer in the other agency to request or provide information.

Third, from time to time conferences are arranged which are attended by line personnel from the parole office, the police department, jails, penitentiaries, court personnel, probation officers and others, at which mutual concerns are discussed.

Fourth, from time to time there are meetings of the heads of the two agencies or their designates, both formal and informal, at which policy which affects both agencies is discussed.

Despite this, prior to the initiation of the liaison project there appeared to be a general consensus among parole staff that communication and cooperation between police and parole was poor, both compared to what

was perceived to be the case in other jurisdictions and compared to what might have been the case in this jurisdiction. Complaints by parole officers (which were documented and enumerated as part of a pre-measure for a project evaluation report completed six months after the project started) were that in many instances they had difficulty getting information from the police department. In addition, while it was not then documented, it is felt on the basis of comments by a number of police officers since the project started, that there was a perception by police personnel that communication with the parole office was poor. Some of the reasons for this poor communication will be expanded upon in a later section.

For a more detailed description of the day to day workings of the liaison project from the point of view of the activities of the liaison officer the reader is referred at this point to the description attached as an appendix.

POLICE AND PAROLE: A CASE OF INTERAGENCY RELATIONS

CONDITIONS OF EXCHANGE

The "Community Crisis" as a Motivating Force

One of the points made by Reid (1964) in his analysis of the determinants of interagency cooperation has to do with the "community crisis" phenomenon. He states: "It is fairly well established that community crises may promote solidarity, cohesion and coordinated effort. Groups within the community react by pulling together and taking joint action to ward off the common threat. Most large communities[?] have experienced juvenile delinquency crises of one sort or another. These usually consist of a widely publicized wave of youthful violence or criminal activity - gang fights, stabbings, murders. Important citizens, community groups, and social agencies become alarmed.

Pressure for remedial action mounts. Meetings of agency representatives are held. Decisions are made about who can do what. Joint programs of action are developed. Many, if not most, demonstration projects involving coordinated agency efforts in this field have their origins in this kind of "community crisis".

The events leading up to the initiation of the present parole/police liaison project follow this scenario almost exactly. In the spring of 1979 a series of spectacular murders, rapes, and other crimes committed by people under the supervision of the parole office set off, and for some time fed, what could be described as a storm of media coverage critical of the parole system most particularly, and of the justice system generally. There was intense public pressure for public inquiries, a royal commission, and overhaul of the justice system in general. In addition there were internal inquiries by parole and correctional authorities into the spectacular crimes. The chairman of the police commission, and various named and unnamed police officers, as well as a judge, several local lawyers, the chamber of commerce, and others contributed to the angry and critical commentary. Citizens in the area were sensitized to the issue and demanded action on open line type programs, letters to the editor and even angry phone calls to the parole office. This series of events is expanded upon in the project evaluation report referred to earlier. (As part of the evaluation, newspaper articles appearing in Edmonton for a period of time prior to the project and after its initiation were clipped out, categorized and counted in order to determine whether the project was having an impact upon public complaints). The high

level of press coverage of the issue continued from about April of 1979 until about August of 1979.

In September of 1979 a meeting was held among the Director General of the prairie region of the Correctional Service of Canada, the District Director of the Parole Office and the Chief and Deputy Chief (Operations Bureau) of the Police Department. At this meeting a decision was made to initiate the liaison project to place a parole officer within the police department to work exclusively as liaison between the two agencies; thus completing the chain of events described earlier by Reid.

It is important to note that as far as I am aware there was never a good case made for there being a close connection between the spectacular crimes which set off the crisis and poor communication between the two agencies. That is, it is unlikely that these events would have been prevented by the presence of a liaison officer. In this respect it may seem that the project is not a logical response to the situation. The project does make sense, and is best understood however, in the context of organizational theory and dynamics.

Social Legitimacy

Parsons (1956) points out that one of the basic requirements for the survival of any public organization is what he refers to as "social legitimacy". The organization must be perceived by its environment as using legitimate means to pursue legitimate goals. If this is not the case the organization stands in peril of not being able to secure the resources from its environment which it needs in order to survive. From an organizational point of view the actual crimes which ignited the Edmonton controversy were unimportant. Much as they may have been deplored by the operatives within the parole office they were not in themselves threatening to the

organization. The threat to the organization was the storm of public criticism which called into question its "social legitimacy". The setting up of the liaison project was in response to the publicity and not to the crimes. As noted earlier, one of the measures of success of the project was a decrease in public complaints by police as measured by counting newspaper articles.

There were of course also several measurements in the evaluation related to increased information flow and reports by parole officers of easier access to police information. The state of criminal activity was not, however linked directly to poor information flow and was considered to be in itself simple a coincidental occurrence of several crimes in the same city, closely spaced in time, about which, little could have been done. This is not to say that improved communication and coordination is not a desirable thing, or that the project may not have a positive impact on criminal activity by persons under supervision.

The liaison project acts as a response to the threat to the parole organization in two ways. By its existence it is itself a display that something is being done, action is being taken. Second since crime reporters acquire the bulk of their information about criminal activity from police, much of the public complaint came directly or indirectly from police sources. Having a parole officer in the police department could be expected to absorb some of this or at least to help ensure that the information the police department has is accurate concerning parolees. This is important because much of the public criticism of the parole system was as a result of the activity of persons who were not parolees, i.e. probationers, persons on bail, persons released from provincial jails etc., or as a result of the mistaken impression that mandatory supervision resulted from a discretionary

release by the parole board. Ensuring that the parole service only takes criticism for cases it is responsible for, will have a net effect of reducing the threat, or deflecting it toward other organizations.

From the perspective of the police department the project favored its social legitimacy position in at least two ways. While the police department was under less pressure from the "community crisis" because the public rhetoric was aimed more at the parole system, there was some pressure on the police department due to the fact that the public nature of the issue had sensitized citizens to some extent to law and order issues in general, to which the police department is expected to respond. Second much of the criticism arose from police sources and the police department was therefore not only pointing out the problem but taking action to deal with it.

Resource Exchange.

Levine and White (1961) , Reid (1964), Benson (1975) and others, have viewed the activity that takes place between organizations as exchanges of resources. The resources exchanged may be money, authority, personnel, clients, information, products and services, or other things. Viewing interorganizational activity as resource exchanges provides a structure which helps to make sense of the various activities engaged in. These exchanges take place because most organizations do not possess all the resources necessary to pursue or achieve all of their goals and turn to each other to obtain them .

Reid defines three levels of exchange activity which take place in social service organizations. The first level he calls "ad-hoc case coordination" which is characterized by informal exchanges, primarily of information by individual practioners about clients.

The second level he refers to as "systematic case coordination" wherein the coordinated activity is still on the case level but specific

rules and procedures govern it. There may be interagency agreements and perhaps special interagency coordinating devices such as case conference committees. Exchanges are systematic and extensive.

The third level he calls "program coordination". The activity here is centered not on individual cases but on agency programs. He mentions joint programs, and detached personnel from one agency to another, among other things which characterize this level of coordination.

Reid points out that as coordination activity ascends the scale from level one toward level three it becomes increasingly more expensive, complex, and difficult for the organizations involved to maintain; that is, more resources must be devoted to it and it must be perceived by the organizations that the cost of maintaining higher level coordination activity is worth the gains to the organization.

One could view the liaison project as a second or third level coordination activity which replaced to some extent, and expanded upon former lower level activity. The evaluation report, notes a fairly dramatic increase in the volume of information flow between the organizations when the information channelled by the liaison officer was added.

If it is true that the liaison project came about largely as a result of a threat to the parole organization's "social legitimacy" then one might expect that as the "community crisis" fades the higher level of resources needed to support the project may come to be seen as less worthwhile and a natural entropic process begin where the project is phased out and coordination activity returns to lower, less expensive forms. This has not happened to date after two and a half years of the project's existence. One might reason from this that in addition to the organizations social legitimacy goals the project serves to further other organizational goals

as well ... I would argue that the creation and continued existence of the project may also partly be accounted for by a shift in organizational goals.

Shared Goals:

Reid (1964) states that the probability of exchange activity between organizations increases with the extent to which they share common goals. Many organizational theorists Etzioni (1961), Etzioni (1964), Perrow (1961) and others have discussed the separation of formal organizational goals and informal or operative organizational goals. While the parole office and the police department may share broad formal goals of protecting the public, reducing crime, etc., the operationalizing of these goals by the two agencies may be quite divergent and perhaps conflicting. A police department may seek to protect the public and reduce crime for example by apprehending and imprisoning criminals while a parole office may seek to reduce crime and protect the public by releasing some of these same criminals from the "criminalizing" effect of imprisonment and seeking to control and alter their criminal behaviour while on the street. Despite this obvious conflict however there are significant areas where the operational goals of the two agencies overlap and are shared. The case supervision goals of the parole office can be roughly broken down into two areas: helping/ rehabilitation goals and control/surveillance goals including reincarceration of the parolee if he is caught engaging in serious criminal activity or violating the conditions of his release. The control/surveillance aspect of parole supervision overlaps with the police department goals related to control and apprehension of criminals generally including those under supervision.

In any parole office or police department given limitations on available manpower and other resources, there is a trading off and balancing of the resources allocated to the pursuit of its various operative goals. The

"community crisis" with its heavy emphasis on dangerous criminals roaming the streets under the supervision of the parole office, starkly emphasized the control/surveillance goal of the parole office and put pressure on that agency to shift resources toward meeting that goal. Similarly the "community crisis" put pressure on the police department to shift resources toward the specific goal of law enforcement directed toward parolees as opposed to more general goals of law enforcement and peace keeping directed toward all criminals. The "crisis" therefore emphasized and spotlighted the area of shared goals necessary for exchange activity to take place, and it helped bring about the shift of resources toward those shared goals necessary to support the higher level of activity.

For the parole office the resources so shifted include among other things a full man year, which is a significant amount for a small organization. For the police department the resources so shifted include office space and equipment as well as the many man hours spent by police officers in meeting with the liaison officer, the production and general viewing of a training video about the project, etc...

The fact that the project has lasted as long as it has, rather than being phased out as the "crisis" faded and the resources reallocated elsewhere, may be also partly explained by a further point made by Reid:

"...the operational goals of an agency may be determined by the resources at its disposal. Etzioni has remarked that 'one of the most important observations of students of organizations is that the 'tools' in part determine the goals to which they are applied.' For example an agency may select from a range of permissible goals those goals that can be most effectively achieved through the services

it has to offer."

In the case of the liaison project it may be seen as a tool to be used by the two agencies. Its existence, while initially an effect of a shift of goals toward the control and surveillance of parolees for which the tool is suited, may have become a cause of this shift as well as an effect and be in itself instrumental in maintaining the emphasis on that shared operational goal.

Complementary Resources.

Another determinant or precondition for interagency coordination stated by Reid (1964) is that agencies involved have complementary resources. Each agency must be in a position to provide the other with resources needed by the other to pursue its operational goals.

The most obvious and important exchange between the parole office and the police department is of information. Each agency collects information that is of use to the other in pursuing shared goals. The way in which this information is exchanged are described in the project description attached as an appendix and need not be further elaborated here. There are however two other types of exchange which occur which are related to the exchange of information. They are staff time and authority.

Staff time is not transferred directly from one agency to another but each agency does receive back from the project in terms of time saved some portion of the staff time required to support it. Prior to the project for example a parole officer seeking information from the police department may have had to make several phone calls, and perhaps write a letter to the police department or possibly go to the police department in person, in order to locate and extract the needed information. Even then only partial or

innacurate information may have resulted. The liaison officer's access to police department records and staff, his relative familiarity with the police department system and his being familiar to police department personnel allows fairly efficient information retrieval and often means that for the parole officer all that is required is a call to the liaison officer.

Similarly there is a time saving for the police department. For many police officers confusion exists about the numerous laws, policies, and agencies concerned with post sentence processing of offenders. Parole, day parole, bail, mandatory supervision, probation, provincial temporary absence programs, federal temporary absence programs, provincial parole boards, transfers of inmates among institutions, penitentiary placement programs, international prisoner exchange agreements, and private after care agencies, are often seen as a confusing tangle by police officers who are unsure who to call to get information, to get action, or to provide information to someone in the system. Part of the function of the liaison officer is to be familiar with these things and to deal with the police officer's requirements, either directly or by referring the officer to the appropriate person in the appropriate organization. This means a time saving for the police officer since again often a single call or message to the liaison officer is all that is required of him.

The fact that providing or acquiring information is relatively simple for officers from both agencies may in itself contribute to a greater flow of information since given limits on the time officers in both agencies have to spend on a given case the fact that information transfer is less time consuming likely results in a greater probability that it will actually occur.

Authority is another medium of exchange noted in the organizational literature (Benson 1975). It is felt that the project facilitates such an

exchange as follows:

A police officer on the street wields the authority of the criminal code and various other statutes and by laws which he uses to keep the peace and preserve order. The liaison project makes it easier and more probable that the authority of the parole board will also be available to him in street situations. His more ready access to information about who is under supervision, and the speedier issue of suspension warrants in appropriate cases facilitates this. For example, two patrolmen one evening recently came upon a fight in the downtown part of Edmonton which involved two mandatory supervision cases who were drunk, beating up two other people. This would normally have resulted in appearance notices being issued for assault and liquor violations to the two offenders. A call to the liaison officer who in turn called the parole officers resulted in decisions to issue suspension warrants and the two offenders were arrested and lodged in cells.

Similarly there are often cases such as domestic disputes, fights, or cases where the supervision case is suspected of criminal activity and where criminal charges would be inappropriate but where referring the behaviour to the parole officer for action is an appropriate measure which may be taken by the police officer through the liaison officer. This fairly quick access to parole information and action by parole staff may help augment the authority of the police officer in many street situations.

For the parole officer, authority is gained from the project for the supervision process. The probability that a violation of a parole condition or of an instruction given to a person under supervision by a parole officer, will become known to the parole officer is considerably increased by the project. It will become known to the parole officer if it is observed by

any of hundreds of police officers and routinely passed to the liaison officer. This was formerly not the case and has resulted in an increase in the authority of the parole office. This is demonstrated by the observation that prior to the project parole officers as noted earlier complained of not being made aware of contacts between police and parolees. Shortly after the beginning of the project an exhaustive search of police records was undertaken in which all recorded contacts between police officers and parolees were searched out for all persons then under supervision since the time of their release from custody. No formal count was made of how much of this information was already known to parole officers but informal conversation between the liaison officer who searched out the information and supervising parole officers led to the conclusion that half or more of it was not known to parole supervisors. In addition several cases which had formerly been supervised by the liaison officer before he started the project were noted to have been convicted of several offences which could well have resulted in their return to prison if the parole supervisor had been aware of them.

Multiple Goals.

A further point in the area of shared goals and complementary resources may be worth noting. It is obvious that the goals of an organization as a whole are not necessarily the same as the personal goals of the operatives within the organization. In addition the operatives at the various levels within the organization may have different goals. It is one task of management to design the organization in such a way that the activities of staff members in furtherance of organizational goals are perceived by staff to also be in furtherance of their own goals. Inevitably conflicts arise in this area within the criminal justice system as for example where official goals involving such notions as truth, justice, and equality may conflict with a

manager's goal of efficient and expeditious processing of cases, a defence attorney's financial goals, a prosecutor's goal of maintaining a high percentage of successful prosecutions, a police officer's goal of clearing numerous criminal cases, or a parole officer's goal of maintaining cooperative working relationships with clients. Similarly a police officer's goal of doing careful thorough investigations may conflict with a middle manager's goal of processing a high number of cases or a top manager's goal of staying within budget.

In the case of cooperative project's between organizations the potential for problems is amplified since goals not only have to be congruent up and down the organizational ladder but across organizational boundaries as well. In order to initiate the project top management in both agencies must be in agreement that shared goals and complementary resources exist and in order to sustain the project over time, similar views must be held by middle management and line staff vis a vis their goals. Parole officers must be in agreement with street level police officers concerning shared goals and complementary resources in order to sustain the liaison project as well as having management agreement on these issues. Not all the goals of police officers have to be in alignment with all of the goals of the parole officers but at every level within the two organizations significant overlap must exist.

The notion of overlap is an important one since it is within this area of overlap that the liaison project exists and operates. This area may be broadened somewhat by the liaison project by attempting to eliminate those areas of goal conflict which are based on misunderstanding, misinformation, and negative stereotyping. For example there is an impression or appearance of goal conflict where police officers believe that all those cases under supervision by the parole office are the result of discretionary releases by

the parole board and that these releases are somehow supported by the parole office. To the extent that police officers are aware of the legislated operation of mandatory supervision that area of conflict is lessened at least as it affects relations between the police department and the local parole office.

Operative goals of the two agencies do not have to be either congruent or conflicting. For the most part large portions of the operation of the parole office and large portions of the operation of the police department neither conflict nor overlap, they are irrelevant to each other. Most of the law enforcement activity of the police department as well as such activities as youth liaison, victim services, and crime prevention programs have little bearing on the operation of the parole office. Similarly much of the activity of the parole office has no impact on the police department. The liaison project may expand the area of overlap within which it works not only by eliminating areas of spurious conflict but also by causing goals which were irrelevant to each other to be newly perceived as overlapping. For example a parole officer keeping careful track of information on a supervision case such as vehicle information, addresses, associates, movements, clothing and physical appearance, income, etc., serves not only his own goal of keeping track of a case but also serves a police department law enforcement goal since this information is potentially available to the police department. Similarly a police officer routinely checking persons on the street and recording the information on "vag" cards is serving not only a police department goal but since some of those persons checked are supervision cases and since the information flows back to the parole office a parole supervision goal is also being met. Thus, overlap is extended into areas where goals were not previously perceived to overlap.

Despite a considerable degree of overlap and large areas of irrelevance, there will inevitably remain some areas where operative goals genuinely conflict for reasons not based on misinformation or negative stereotyping. No liaison project or other coordinative device can eliminate this, nor probably should it.

LIAISON ROLES AS A PHENOMENON AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Liaison Roles as a Phenomenon

A fair body of literature exists which deals with liaison functions within organizations (intra-organizational liaison) and a small amount of literature exists concerning inter-organizational functions, however in both cases the literature deals almost exclusively with large business organizations. Within the criminological literature little attention appears to have been paid to inter-organizational functioning specifically with reference to liaison roles within the criminal justice system.

Liker (1961) developed the idea of the "linking pin" function wherein a member of an organization has membership in two or more work groups within an organization in order to help work groups achieve and communicate consensus and to facilitate conflict resolution.

Thompson (1967) and Galbraith (1973) both note that integrating the sub-units of an organization (in some cases through the use of what Thompson calls "boundary spanning roles") becomes more important as the task inter-dependence between sub-units is increased. The point is made that different sub-units develop different language ("lingo"), different norms and values, different ways of processing information etc. and that as this occurs the potential for negative stereotyping and conflict between sub-units increases. In the area of inter-organizational relationships in addition to Reid (1964) cited earlier, Hall et al (1977) discuss interorganizational relationships and how they differ as the bases of the relationships differ i.e. legally

mandated relationships, voluntary relationships which are standardized by formal agreements, and non standardized voluntary relationships. The issues of perceived competence of personnel, power, performance, and compatibility of operating philosophy are examined within this framework. Levine and White (1961) cited earlier and Benson (1975) discuss interorganizational activity as an exchange of resources. Pfeffer and Nowak (1976) discuss the conditions under which joint ventures will be undertaken by business organizations. In the criminal justice field O'Leary and Newman (1970) cited earlier discuss techniques for conflict resolution between probation officers and police officers, with liaison roles being one briefly mentioned possibility for consideration. Generally liaison roles are seen chiefly as temporary responses in specialized situations for resolving conflict and/or achieving consensus.

Hackler (1979) briefly discusses liaison roles within the criminal justice system and cites several liaison roles very similar to the liaison project being discussed here as examples. He notes that liaison roles between organizations in the system are not often studied. He states as a hypothesis that these roles occur rather naturally in systems as a result of information flow between organizations becoming cumbersome and inefficient as organizations grow in size or presumably in complexity. Hackler states that these roles may become very influential in decision making, presumably because the person occupying the role has access to a large quantity of information and because the liaison person interacts frequently with many operatives from both organizations. In addition one could hypothesize that the liaison person is in a position to selectively transmit information or to "filter" or "color" it and thus potentially at least, have a disproportionate impact on decision making and decision makers.

Informal Communication Networks.

One of the notable characteristics of the liaison project and presumably other similar ones as well is that much or even most of the activity of the liaison officer could be described as informal. Much of the information exchanged is verbally transmitted and remains unrecorded in official files or documents although it is often recorded in informal notes kept by officers. It could be argued that the information informally transmitted nevertheless has an impact on later formal decisions and on the operations of the two agencies.

Khandwalla (1977) in discussing informal structures within formal organizations states that: "The non-formal organization arises because the formally designed organization is insufficient in meeting the very human needs of its members for support, friendship, social interaction, and so on." While this is no doubt true it is I think insufficient to explain the existence and the extent of informal communication networks. The "old boy" or "old school tie" networks among organizations are notoriously efficient at transacting business and getting things done in spite of formal structures and channels of communication rather than because of them. I would hypothesize that rather than simply meeting human social and friendship needs, that informal communications are vital in meeting operative organizational goals. While formal structures and formal communication channels are set up to meet formal organizational goals, the informal or operative goals of organizations are pursued partly through informal structures and informal communication networks. For example formal goals of the court system such as pursuit of truth, justice, equality before the law, and accountability, have attendant formal structures in adversary court proceedings, rules of evidence, checks and balances in authority, appeal procedures etc. Operative

goals of administrative efficiency and other goals of the operatives within the system require the use of informal networks and structures such as deals by police for reduced charges in return for information, plea bargaining procedures, the production of rewards to the accused for guilty pleas, and sanctions for not guilty pleas. (Blumberg 1969, Blumberg 1967, Skolnick 1967, Cole 1976)

Observational evidence seems to suggest that police officers because of the nature of their work rely unusually heavily on informal communication networks. This is also true but to a lesser extent of parole officers. In the case of police officers this may be accounted for in part by the much written about (Clark 1965, Bedrosian 1981, Westly 1953, Niederhoffer 1967, Skolnick 1966) notions of solidarity, secretiveness, shared group norms, etc. among policemen said to be brought about by the intense public scrutiny of the actions of police officers, coupled with the fact that the uncertainties, contingencies, and ambiguities associated with police work necessitate the making of many semi-legal and illegal decisions.

Other factors which contribute to the use of informal communication channels by police may be that problems exist in discussing ongoing investigations or suspects with "outsiders" due to the fact that suspects or others with an improper interest may become aware of police interest prematurely and thus "blow" an investigation. Similarly intimate knowledge of police methods, or equipment or knowledge of the lack of progress in an investigation may be perceived to work against police interests.

This leads to the observation that police officers tend to communicate with other organizations both inside and outside the criminal justice system and even with other police departments on the basis of personal "contacts" who are considered to be "reliable" rather than through more impersonal formally

established channels. For example the liaison officer recently observed a conversation wherein a senior detective required some information from a major American city police force pertaining to some suspects believed to be hiding out there. His dilemma was that he didn't know anyone from the other police department. The problem was solved by another senior officer who stated that he had a contact in a police force in a city nearby the first city who was considered reliable and that a phone call to him might produce an introduction to a reliable contact in the desired place. Similarly in dealing with parole offices, prisons, and other post sentencing agencies personal contacts are used extensively. The liaison project acts as an extension of the personal contact network since it makes use, on behalf of police officers, of the contacts in the parole and prison system of the liaison officer. This also works in reverse in that personal contacts between police officers and the liaison officer are used by parole and prison personnel.

As suggested earlier, there was prior to the liaison project a perception that communication between the two agencies was poor. Increases in size and complexity of both organizations and changes in staff in both organizations during the years prior to the liaison project meant that most police officers lacked a personal "contact" in the parole office and as a result were reluctant to call.

Similarly parole officers lacking personal contacts in the police department were obliged to use formal channels of communication which tended to be cumbersome and less satisfactory for the pursuit of operative goals. As a result of these factors the amount of information actually exchanged, and the degree of coordination, dwindled. Under these circumstances as Hackler (1979) points out a liaison role is a fairly natural response since it lends itself to personal informal communications.

Informal Communication and Freedom of Information

A factor which no doubt added impetus to the formation and maintenance of the liaison project is the recently passed freedom of information legislation. This legislation provides that file information held by federal agencies including parole and penitentiaries is to be accessible to the individuals to whom the files pertain. Despite certain exemptions allowed for security reasons, concern exists among many prison, parole, and police personnel that damaging information may end up in the wrong hands through the workings of the formal structures and processes established to comply with this legislation. Concern on the part of the police department in Edmonton was great enough that shortly after the proclamation of the bill, all automatic parole reports were withheld from the parole service for a period of several months and only reintroduced after instruction to police personnel that these reports could potentially be read by the inmate or parolee. This had of course a predictable effect upon the willingness of many police officers to include a great deal of information in these reports or to supply information to the parole service at all since it might end up on an accessible file.

This development also had a predictable effect upon the candidness of parole officers observations and evaluations as recorded on files. Generally much information, especially negative or damaging information, or information from sensitive or vulnerable sources is not placed on official files and is lost for official decision making purposes such as parole board decisions. The information is transmitted and used however by agency operatives via informal communication networks including the liaison project. Thus while the operation of the legislation has had the effect of diminishing the usefulness of official records and official channels of communication,

(one is reminded of Garfinkel and Bittner's (1967) work "Good Organizational Reasons for Bad Clinic Records"), and of suppressing and driving underground much potentially useful information, it has also had the effect of energizing and amplifying the use of informal communication networks and of increasing the utility of the liaison project.

SUMMARY

In this paper a joint liaison project between a police department and a parole office was examined. It was characterized as a coordinative device designed to coordinate the activities of two organizations to more efficiently achieve their goals. A perception of poor communication existed between the agencies for some time prior to the project but the project was finally pushed into existence by a "community crisis" which focused attention on the shared goals of the two agencies and provided motivation for its creation. The continued existence of the project is stated to be dependant on the continued perception of there being shared goals between the two agencies. The project is seen to operate as an exchange of resources between the two agencies, and its continued existence also depends on there being a perception within both agencies that the other agency is providing a valuable resource. The project itself is seen as potentially or actually having an impact on these perceptions of shared goals and complementary resources.

The project is further seen as operating to a great extent in an informal manner and as such is seen as aptly suited to the peculiar communication needs between a police department and a parole office. The operation of freedom of information legislation is stated to have increased the need for such a project and to have added to the informal nature of its operation.

APPENDIX I

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A Brief Description of the Project From the Point of View of the Activities Of The Liaison Officer:

A Report submitted by the liaison officer covering his activities during the first three months of the project, and which was incorporated as an appendix to the evaluation report will be used as a basis for this description with some modifications for purposes of clarity and brevity as well as some additions at the end to describe activities not covered in the report.

Breakdown of Activities:

(1) Approximately forty patrol division role call parades were attended by the liaison officer. Meetings were also held with all traffic section officers and all task force squads. These meetings included almost all uniformed members of the department, about five hundred officers in all. On each occasion the liaison project was explained and questions answered. The help of the officers was requested and the help of the parole service was offered to police, particularly regarding the exchange of information. Business cards were given to each officer which included the liaison officer's phone number and the twenty four hour number of the parole office.

(2) The liaison officer has met with the senior officers and many of the detectives in the specialized units such as narcotics, fraud, integrated intelligence unit, homicide, sex crimes, morality, etc. These have been both formal and informal meetings in which the program was explained, requests for any information concerning parolees made, and an offer of information concerning cases under our supervision upon request was made. Officers from various of

the administrative and support units such as case supervisors, central registry and crime index, have been contacted by the liaison officer in the course of setting up the program and on a day to day basis. In general good working relationships have been established with various members of the department.

(3) After receiving requests from several units it was arranged to mail copies of our monthly parolee list to all investigative and patrol units.

(4) Shortly after the beginning of the project it was arranged to have copies of the police department's daily information bulletins made available at the parole office for perusal by parole officers. The information bulletins contain a summary of crimes in the past twenty four hours, descriptions of suspects, composite pictures, property stolen, etc. Parole officers are being encouraged to review these to see if persons described may be under their supervision and to relay any potentially useful information to the police either directly or through the liaison officer.

(5) Parole officers are additionally being encouraged to communicate either directly or through the liaison officer, to police in cases where criminal activity by persons under supervision is suspected or in cases of persons released on mandatory supervision who are expected to be violent or dangerous or to become involved in criminal activity. In extreme cases a poster may be made up for inclusion in the daily bulletin or information may be given to Staff Sergeants for dissemination to squads through roll call parades or otherwise.

(6) On a daily basis all arrest reports and prisoner booking sheets are reviewed by the liaison officer, and the names of any cases under our supervision noted and information pertaining to the arrest passed on to the parole officer supervising. Some of these reports pertain to the arrest of persons under supervision from other jurisdictions and this information is passed to

the parole officer in that area for action.

(7) When any person on the street is dealt with by police, the name is radioed in to crime index for a C.P.I.C. check. An arrangement has been made for crime index personnel to advise the liaison officer when this occurs with any cases under supervision. The circumstances of the check are ascertained and this is then followed up by the liaison officer with the police officer or is passed to the parole officer.

(8) When police officers on the street come across persons or information which may be useful as "criminal intelligence" a card is filled out identifying the person(s) involved and the information obtained. Suspicious activities, suspected crimes, known criminals checked, etc. During the liaison officer's attendance at roll call parades and during less formal contacts, police officers have been encouraged to put in one of these "vag cards" when they encounter a parolee. All incoming "vag cards" are reviewed by the liaison officer for the names of any parole cases or information concerning them.

(9) Parole officers have been encouraged to enquire of the liaison officer for police information when they are unable to obtain the information directly. The liaison officer has been granted access to all police files and information. This access often enables the liaison officer to dig up the information required and supply it (with exceptions for infrequent occasions when it is felt that the police department may object to the release of confidential information) to the parole officer or refer the parole officer to the police officer who may have the required information.

(10) Police officers are similarly encouraged to enquire of the liaison officer for information concerning persons under federal jurisdiction. Usually the information is found or in some cases the police officer is put

in contact with the parole officer or other person who may have the information. Many general enquiries are answered concerning how the system operates, pen placement, parole eligibility, remission, mandatory supervision, day parole etc.

(11) A series of "ride alongs" on duty shifts with detectives was arranged and co-ordinated largely through the liaison officer.

(12) Near the beginning of the project central registry records were searched on all persons under supervision and a summary of all recorded police contacts with these persons since their release from institutions was taken, and this information recorded. Much of it was already known to parole officers but much of it was not.

(13) An arrangement has been made with case supervisors unit (which reviews police case files for follow up action) to bring to the attention of the liaison officer any files which concern persons under parole, or mandatory supervision.

(14) A request was made of the liaison officer by the police department for information on the amount of criminal activity by parolees. A compilation was done of the number of persons (under supervision) charged and the number of charges for the preceding three month period. This was broken down by type of supervision (parole, day parole, mandatory supervision) and by type of offence. This report was submitted.

(15) In a few cases the liaison officer was able to link two or more police officers who were both interested in the same parolee for criminal activity, as opposed to the more normal linking of the two agencies. In addition, occasionally parole officers are linked who are supervising two or more parolees who are engaged together in criminal activity, thus enabling a pooling of information and comparing of notes.

(16) A short video tape on the project was made by the police department

training section, and has been circulated to all officers in the department.

(17) A file of pictures and basic information on all supervision cases is kept by the liaison officer for use by police officers.

(18) On a couple of occasions the liaison officer has lectured on the liaison project and parole in general, to senior investigators courses put on by the police department for newly promoted detectives.

(19) Some months after the project began, a meeting was held with the director of the parole office, the liaison officer and his immediate supervisor, and senior officers at R.C.M.P. "K" Division. Some similar activity has therefore taken place there, although on a much more modest scale since their relatively smaller number of officers deal with proportionately fewer parole cases. Some contacts have been made and some meetings attended by the liaison officer with R.C.M.P. detachments in areas adjacent to the city.

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